



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Office of the Fire Marshal
Donn V. Dobson Fire Marshal

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Good morning members of the Public Safety & Security Committee my name is Donn Dobson & I am the Fire Marshal for the Town of Old Saybrook.

I am offering my written testimony **AGAINST** Raised H.B. No. 5156 **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISMISSAL OF LOCAL FIRE MARSHALS**. The current language in 29-299 is very clear & defined as to the removal of fire marshal if needed. The Statute has been used when needed and is clearly effective in its present form. The changes to this statute as prescribed in the raised bill would allow for the removal of a fire marshal without a hearing, without just cause and without a due process. It appears that there would be a "proper inquiry" which is not clearly defined in the statute. If a fire marshal has been neglectful in his or her duties there is a current clear & defined path on how to remove a fire marshal from his or her duties for negligence of those duties. **Anyone** can report that a fire marshal is negligent of their duties with a written complaint to the State Fire Marshal, who must investigate those allegations and if found that there is probable cause, can hold a public hearing. In the current statute, a local fire marshal must be given written notice as to the public hearing, a copy of the complaint and reasoning for the specific grounds for the revocation if needed. This appears to me to be a fair and equitable way to police local fire marshals within their communities as well as the State of Connecticut and has shown over the course of time to be very effective.

Local Fire Marshals in the State of Connecticut in general do not have an enviable job to begin with, and we are not always the most popular people with their city or town leaders when it comes to upholding fire codes and statutes. I know of some instances where political pressure has been applied to local fire marshals with respect to upholding the fire code with relation to fire code inspections and development of projects. The last thing a local fire marshal needs is his or her local leaders threatening their job or their ability to do their job, with removal of duties because they don't agree with certain aspects of their job or how it relates to inspections, plan review or upholding the **CT State Fire Safety Code**, *especially in these very challenging economic times*.

C.G.S. 29-297, 29-298, 299- & 29-300 were put in place to protect both the community in which a fire marshal serves as well as the fire marshal themselves. Changes to the current Statute (**C.G.S. 29-299**) would threaten the safety & welfare of those the **CT State Fire Safety Code** are meant to protect in the first place. We cannot let the ever changing political winds in municipalities dictate the direction of how we protect the citizens of Connecticut.

